

Henry Posner III gallery

PROCESSING ARCHIVIST GIL TAYLOR has recently completed his digitization work on Henry Posner III's slides. The Posner Collection contains approximately 30,000 color slides that date from 1973 to 2009 and portray railroading in fifty-four different countries. It is truly one-of-a-kind for its coverage of so many railroad operations that few, if any, other photographers documented. Gil's work included arranging and rehousing all of the slides, recording their metadata, and digitizing more than fifteen percent of them, for 4,638 image files. We're excited to present a few of our (many) favorites in this gallery edition of OTA, and we look forward to sharing many more in the months and years to come.

Gil says, "Working with and processing the Henry Posner III Collection was more than a treat, it was a globetrotting railroad experience. The photographs sent me on a vicarious journey to myriad farflung cities in fifty-four different countries and took me for rides through innumerable scenic and rarely photographed locales. From tracks snaking through the mountains of Peru and Guatemala, to steam-powered sugarcane operations in Cuba and the Philippines, I found the Posner Collection to possess not only range, but also profound depth in its depictions and subjects. Alongside their strong compositions and colors, the images display a journalistic spontaneity and a raw grit that presses upon the viewer a deep sense of place and immediacy. A sense that, for instance, makes one feel they are right there with Posner and his camera inside the cab of an Estonian diesel with the engineer. More broadly, working with this collection provided for me an encompassing railroad education, witnessing the inner workings and behind-the-scenes of operations both domestic and international. I'm more than excited that we are able to begin sharing Henry's photography and I hope that everyone who encounters it is left with this same impression and experience."

Gil is now editing some of his favorite Posner photographs to add to our Odyssey online database in the coming months. Once Gil has posted some of Posner's color work, he'll return to the collection to digitize the black-and-white negatives—eight binders containing about 7,500 photographs arrived at the Center last fall. Also, Gil continues to fill image and research requests as part of his reference duties. He notes that the J. Parker Lamb and Jim Shaughnessy collections were in high demand from the Center's reference patrons in January.

Working next door to Gil at our archival storage facility, associate archivist Heather Sonntag is making great progress with the Steinheimer-Burman Collection. She recently digitized Stein's slides from Boxes F, M, and U, which document his trips to Donner Pass in 1984 and 1985. In addition, Heather took a short break from processing in early February, journeying to Denver to retrieve collection materials bequeathed to the Center by the late, great Ron Hill. This new material will be accessioned into our archive alongside Hill's previous donation, lovingly delivered by Jeff Brouws, who serves on our board and had a nearly fifty-year friendship with Ron. Processing Hill's slides was Heather's first project with the Center; it feels fitting that she was the one to bring his final batch of material home.

Meanwhile, at our Monroe Street office, processing archivist Natalie Krecek continues to crank away at the negatives in the Jim Shaughnessy Collection. She's currently digitizing Shaughnessy's images of the Quebec Central Railroad and the Reading Railroad. In addition, Natalie's helped prepare for our recent members-only event, Inside the Fred Springer Collection, digitizing some of Springer's more obscure black-and-white negatives for the program.

We also have some staffing news! In January, Martin Kaehrle became part of the Center's collections staff as our new digital projects coordinator. In this role, Martin leads our continued implementation of Odyssey, serves as the technical liaison with HistoryIT (Odyssey's developer), and manages our cataloging and digital curation workflows. A 2023 graduate of UW Madison's iSchool, Martin joins the Center with a good deal of relevant education and professional experience—he's been involved with web administration and data collection for UConn's Connecticut Bird Atlas online portal for the past four years—and even more passion—Martin's been building websites for fun since he was just ten years old.

Since starting with us, Martin has caught on quickly to Odyssey as well as the Center's local metadata schema and cataloging practices. In his first few weeks, Martin spent his time crosswalking and uploading to Odyssey full sets of metadata from the Furler, Abbey, McIlwraith, Hill, and Hand collections, creating approximately 40,000 new item-level records for internal use. Next, Martin will be doing some additional digitization and posting for the John C. Illman Collection. Welcome aboard, Martin!

INTERVIEWS

Adrienne Evans

PHOTOGRAPHS

Henry Posner III
Collection of the Center



Left: Sunlight streams into the Rede Ferroviária Federal's shop at Tubarão, Brazil, on August 23, 1983. Posner-04-05-15

Below: A China Railway QJ steam locomotive approaches the Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge with a mixed freight train west in August of 1981. Posner-05-02-19

Following spread: Workers ride atop a boxcar and beneath smoke from Ferrocarriles de Guatemala 205, a Baldwin 2-8-2, on February 18, 1998. Posner-10-35-12







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Right: Anne Molloy, Henry's wife, watches a group of children through the window of a South African Railways passenger car somewhere between Bethlehem and Bloemfontein, South Africa on October 14, 1985. Posner-21-36-14



Below: A Ferrocarriles Mesopotamico-General Urquiza worker transloads bricks between Brazilian and Argentinian freight cars in Paso de los Libres, Argentina, on March 7, 1995. Posner-02-01-13





A one-car Ferrocarriles de Cuba electric passenger train crosses a bridge over a worker walking along another set of tracks on March 3, 1980. Posner-07-04-15

Right: Swedish State Railways workers demonstrate how to water the locomotives using a long wooden sluice that brings water through the forest to the tracks. Shot in July 1982, somewhere along the Inlandsbanan in the forested Swedish interior. Posner-23-06-18



Below: Dzherelo-SPK workers examine Soviet class L 2-10-0 locomotive 5141 during a stop in Delyatyn, Ukraine, on February 20, 2008. Posner-24-02-09





A Chicago Transit Authority train travels along the "L" tracks in downtown Chicago on June 18, 1973. Posner 24-15-12

Collection	Processing Status
Jim Shaughnessy	In progress, ~60% complete
John Gruber	B&W complete; slides to commence later in 2024
Ronald C. Hill	Additional materials just delivered; schedule TBD
Henry Posner III	Slides complete; B&W to commence later in 2024
Richard Steinheimer / Shirley Burman Steinheimer	In progress, ~15% complete
John C. Illman	Processing complete; posting in progress
Stan Kistler	Estimated start: mid-2024
Karl Zimmermann	Estimated start: mid-2024